



McDougall's Good Stories For Children



THE WONDERFUL TALE OF CYRUS JACKSON AND HIS STICKY FLY PAPER

EVERYBODY in our town declared that Cyrus Jackson was a "lazy good-for-nothing," and considered that he was a discredited not only to his parents, but to the village, because, when other boys were working on the farms or in the village store, Cyrus sat around and seemed to be almost sleepy, while the flies buzzed about his head in clouds. One day, however, when he took out a patent for a fly paper that caught more flies than any other, and began to manufacture this paper in enormous quantities, selling it all over the country in wagonloads to every druggist in the land, he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was a brainy inventor and was rapidly becoming the wealthiest person in Hazarak. After that we were quite proud of him, and pointed to his big fly-paper factory with great satisfaction, telling all visitors that Cyrus Jackson employed seven hundred boys and girls there.

When Cyrus had filled all the drug and grocery stores with his goods he decided to go abroad and place fly paper in every land, for it is almost unknown outside of our country, although the flies, perhaps for that very reason, are much more numerous everywhere else. After traveling in many a foreign country with great pleasure and much profit he at last reached that faraway and almost unheard-of land, the kingdom of Ghurra.

This realm is never placed on the maps in the geography because King Oleo, its ruler, has forbidden it, as he doesn't desire it to be advertised at all; but we who have traveled know all about it, which isn't much, after all, as it's a small kingdom, although very pretty and wealthy.



When Cyrus arrived in the city of Ghurra he soon learned that a very peculiar condition of affairs prevailed there, a state of things that amused him very much. In fact, the people were so interested in it that very few had time to talk with him about fly paper at all, and even the druggists, who were awful gossipers, continually wandered away from the subject and began to talk about the one interesting matter that absorbed the minds of all the people.

This was the Bachelor Princess, as the king's eldest daughter was called. Formaline was her name, and she was the eldest of six, Alice, Ernestine, Mandoline, Ethelberta and Genevieve being the names of the others. Formaline was now almost 20 years old, an age never before reached by a princess before she was married; and, so far, she had betrayed not the slightest desire to wed. Of course, everybody is interested in the marriage of a princess at any time, but in this case there was a reason for most absorbing interest, for the law in Ghurra was that no younger princess could wed until the eldest had been disposed of in matrimony. Hitherto, for hundreds of years, this law had been duly observed, but it really seemed that now it would have to be altered, for nothing would induce Formaline to consider the matter of her wedding for a minute.

She refused to give more than a scornful glance at any of the many princes who came from distant lands to ask for her hand or win her love, and she made all manner of fun of each of them, ridiculing them and mimicking their ways until she made even the king laugh, although he wanted her to get married as much as did her poor sisters, each of whom was much in love with a handsome prince. The eldest princess was always deep in some queer study of which nobody in all the realm had the least idea, such things as psychology, osteology, botany and geology occupying nearly all her time, although she painted beautiful pictures, also, now and then, wandering far into the forest for subjects for her brush. At these times many a lover/lover/foreign prince would accompany her, in the hope that among the lovely woodland scenes her hard heart would soften and Formaline would listen; but it was in vain that they besieged her; she was like marble.

The lovers of her five sisters simply hated Formaline, for they were all at great expense there in Ghurra, with their many servants, and the time was passing rapidly.

"We will be all old graybeards ere this girl finds a mate," cried Ohara, a Milesian prince, who had waited nearly two years for his bride. "I look in the glass daily for white hairs!"

"I will be in the Ghurra almshouse if it keeps on much longer!" declared Skimesola, a prince from Borneo. "I have scarcely ten shillings left, and unless I can borrow I'll be a pauper!"

"It will come to cloping with Alice!" said Prince Demonska, the Italian. "We cannot wait for ever on the whims of this old maid!"

"That's what she will soon be if she doesn't get a gait on!" cried Ohara, "and the Princess Ethelberta will be in her dotage. Who wants to marry an old crock?"

But Formaline was not old, and she was the most beautiful of the six lovely sisters; and, besides that, hers was the most thoughtful and earnest face among them all. She had really resolved to marry none but a man who was distinguished for great achievements, and, so far, she had met none during her twenty years of life, although many men visited the land seeking for her hand.

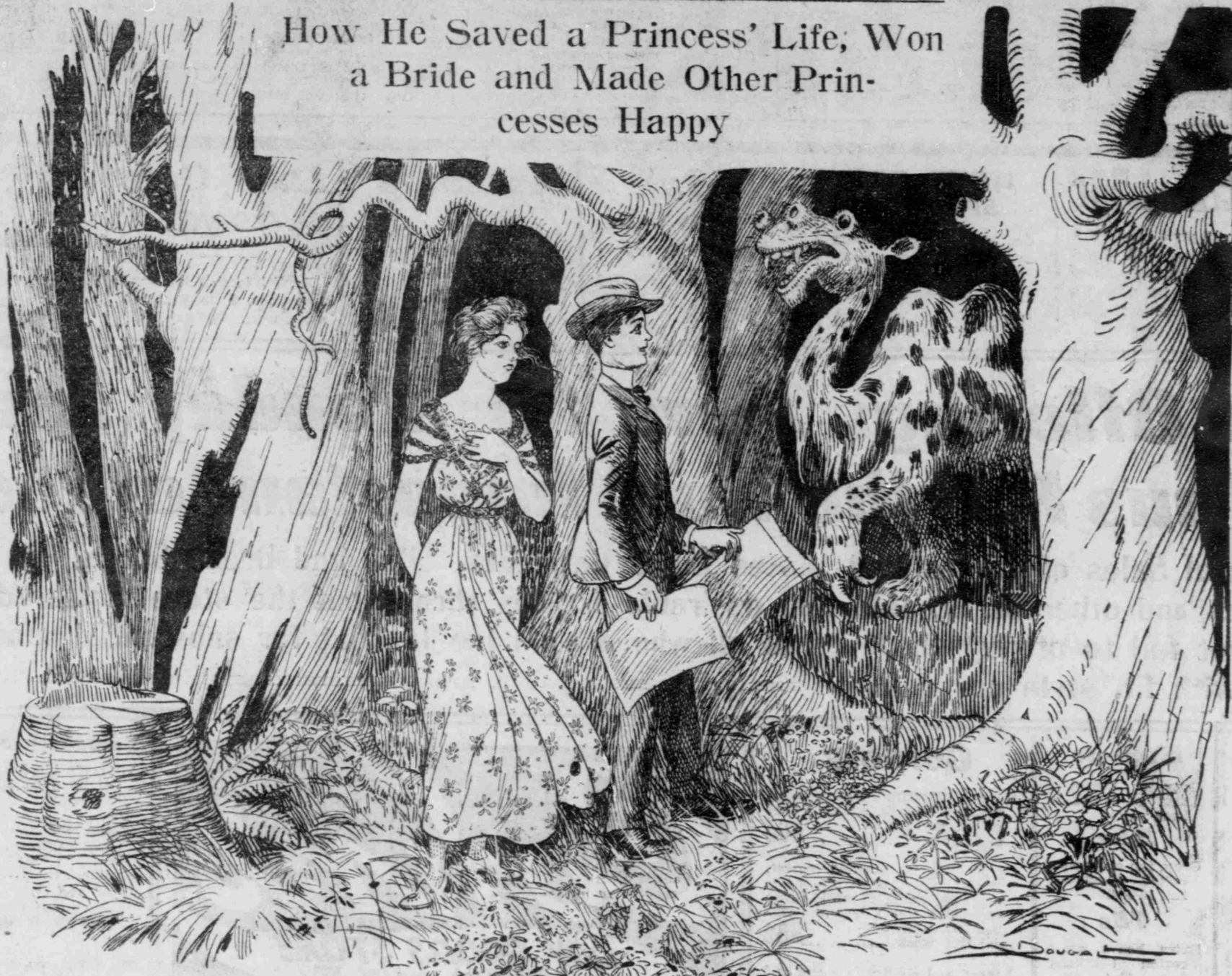


She had read of great men, warriors, statesmen, scientists, writers and cartoonists, the latter being probably the most worthy of all men, and she wasn't going to throw herself away on anything in the line that was ordinary and commonplace, as were the foreign princes who hung about the court of King Oleo.

Why, they couldn't even compose music or write poetry, these princes; and as for great deeds, they were scarcely able to think of them without feeling quite tired and wanting to lie down and rest. Yet, so eager was she to meet a really great man, Formaline was always informed of every new arrival at all the hotels in Ghurra, and was told by the secret service police just what each had done or ever expected to do in the future.

Sometimes, when a stranger arrived, she secretly hoped that he would amount to something in the world of art or science, and that he would be asking for her hand; but, unfortunately, all the really great and distinguished strangers who came to Ghurra were already married, for Dame Fortune attends to that matter early in life, it would seem, and settles it for good, so as not to be bothered

How He Saved a Princess' Life; Won a Bride and Made Other Princesses Happy



THE MOLECULE WAS RUSHING AT THEM

about it when he gets busy later.

Therefore, the lovely princess was at heart as bitterly disappointed as were all her suitors, although, of course, nobody suspected it except her maniacure, from whom no secrets were hidden. And this secret disappointment was the cause of the taunts she cast at her sisters, wondering sarcastically why a girl needs a man and why one must be compelled to have them dangling at her heels making goo-goo eyes all the time. She said she preferred dogs!

In fact, she had taken a vow once, in early childhood, never to look twice at a man whom her dogs didn't like, and to this she had always adhered quite constantly. I will confess that I do, myself, consider it a pretty good rule, for those whom my dogs do not like I scarcely ever find worth bothering about, and those whom Tatters bites or Bruce growls at are never allowed about the house alone. I think they'll steal spoons! Formaline was never seen without several dogs at her heels, setters, terriers and long, bandy-legged dachshunds being her favorites, and the noise they made as they scampered merrily through the woods was the most cheerful in her ears; far pleasanter than the compliments of the lovelorn princes.



The principal reason for the girl being surrounded by dogs, however, was that a fierce and dangerous animal frequented these woods. It was called the Molecule, and it was a large, swift-moving, voracious sort of creature, somewhat resembling a camel, on legs like those of a bear, with sharp teeth and an insatiable appetite, preferring small boys generally; but quite willing, when these were not forthcoming, to devour even old, scrawny men and women.

This Molecule had set eyes on the five princesses long before, but had never been able to catch them in the forest. In fact, only Formaline frequented the somewhat dangerous woodlands when the Molecule was known to be in that vicinity, as reported by the king's gamekeepers. The oldest princess, however, guarded by her trusty dogs, scorned to show fear of any wild beast, although, I am afraid, they could not have defended her for very long against this immense and savage beast, bigger than an elephant and more dangerous than a lion.

Now Cyrus Jackson, who had the same tastes and feelings regarding dogs and such things as the princess, having found it almost impossible to interest the druggists in his fly paper because of their absorption in the marriage question, thought that he would explore the deep, shady wood surrounding the city of Ghurra, which was called the Dhubbala Forest; and, taking his stick, he strolled forth from the Bhunghar Hotel early one morning, with no warning whatever of any dangerous beast called the Molecule or any other name, for of this he had heard nothing, as everybody thought of but one thing.

The sun was scarcely over the low hills when he found himself quite lost in the deep, dark wood, with nothing to guide his steps but a faint indication of lightly trodden footprints in the grass, footprints that led even deeper into the forest. Following these he came suddenly upon a dog who began to bark fiercely, and then he found himself surrounded by other dogs, who, however, seeing at once that he was a dog's friend, for all dogs know one another, crowded around him with every sign of friendliness and delight at meeting him.

In another moment appeared the lovely Princess Formaline, who, seeing her dogs all seemed to be friendly with the stranger, at once came toward him. As Cyrus had been carefully described to her by the secret service police, she knew him at once, but he didn't know the beautiful princess. However, having dogs to talk about, they soon got very well acquainted, and walked along together discussing all sorts of things, and when he had told her

about his wonderful fly paper she said that she had read about it and wished to have some in the palace.

"I'll send you a dozen packages to-day," said Cyrus, "and also several of my patent gold-plated holders, so that you won't have to touch it with your hands, for it's tremendously sticky!" Then he showed her some samples of his fly paper, which he always carried with him.

"What on earth is it made of?" asked the princess. "What is it? and please tell me what to use to take it off when it sticks to my hands or my dress!"

"Ah, that's a great secret!" exclaimed Cyrus, laughing. "Can't tell that!"

The princess, who was not used to being refused anything, pouted a bit, but just then the dogs all began to bark wildly and rush into the underbrush with their tails between their legs, showing signs of terror.

"What's the matter?" asked Cyrus. The princess began to tremble, and said, in a faint voice:

"They've never acted that way before! I fear me it's the awful Molecule coming!"

"What's a Molecule?" demanded Cyrus. "Let him come!"

"He will surely devour us both unless we can escape," cried Formaline, shaking and turning faint as a great shadow came moving toward them. It was the dread Molecule hurrying to his prey, having scented them afar off. Cyrus now wished that he had carried a good revolver instead of a few sheets of fly paper into the woods, but he placed himself before the lovely girl resolved to let the animal seize him while she fled.

But it was impossible to flee, for it was upon them in a twinkling; and then, seeing that both stood as if paralyzed by fear, it straightened up its long neck and stopped to stare at them in great satisfaction, for both were young and plump. Then it yawned, opened its vast red cavern of a mouth so that Cyrus saw away down its scarlet throat. Then it blinked its great bulging eyes, looking them over in gloating and smacking its coarse, thick lips. It was about to snatch its horrified prey, and it seemed to prefer the girl first, for it pushed Cyrus aside and reached for her.

At that instant, seizing the fortunate moment, the clever lad, whose mind was ever alert and ready, slapped a sheet of the stickiest sticky fly paper ever made right over each bulging red eye!

Now what do you think of that? The Molecule rose up on his hind legs and tried to claw the paper off, but that, as you may perhaps know, only made it stick far worse! Then he rolled over on the sandy soil, getting mixed up with leaves and twigs until he was a mess that was amazing. He didn't look like a Molecule at all!



Then he began to roar and whine, and finally, struck by a terrible fear that he was in some sort of a trap, he fled with leaps and bounds. Away he rushed, blindly dashing along over tree-stumps, logs and rocks until he fell into the Bhunghar river that bounds Ghurra, and, as the Molecule can't bear the least touch of water on his hide, he took a fit and sank like a stone into the depths of that famous and beautiful stream. So that was the last of the Molecule, and good riddance to him!

It was the princess who spoke first, for Cyrus was too astonished at the success of his clever action to do more than stare after the animal. She said in a sweet and tender voice:

"You have saved my life, Mr. Jackson. I will marry you, for, of course, that is the very least I can do, in spite of my objections to being wedded. You have but to speak to my father, and he will doubtless gladly give consent, for they've all been anxious to marry me off these two years."

But the wily Cyrus wanted her to consent of her

own free will, not to marry him out of gratitude for saving her life, and he said:

"Oh, but I don't want to marry! I prefer, just as you do, to remain single!"

"But it isn't often that you have a chance to marry a princess!" said Formaline, rejoicing that he had not accepted her offer, but feeling a trifle put out. "Many princes are asking for my hand!"

"I know it," replied Cyrus; "but I have a great secret which I cannot reveal except to my wife, and that is the secret of the manufacture of my wonderful Imperial Fly Paper. I must tell it to her, but no other, and I am resolved to remain single so that nobody will share it with me. Do you see?"

"But you will tell your wife?" she asked. "I am obliged to," said he, smiling, for he saw his deep-laid scheme working.

Of course, she instantly resolved to marry him, for, like a real scientist, she yearned to learn that great secret; and nothing could oppose Formaline when she was resolved.



"I will gladly be a brother to you, however," added Cyrus, "and that, no doubt, will be pleasanter, for there will be none of that love-making and cooing, you see. If we were engaged it would be very sickening. I am sure." Thus spoke the wily, foxy lad, although even then he was wishing for nothing so much as to kiss the beautiful creature by his side. Formaline answered:

"I have often thought so; but, somehow, methinks it wouldn't be so nasty, after all, to be loved and caressed. At least my sisters tell me so."

"Oh, it's dreadful!" cried Cyrus, pretending to shudder. "Just think, now, of my kissing you!"

"Perhaps, if you try it, I can tell better, for I've never been kissed!" replied the princess, blushing deeply, and so Cyrus kissed her twice in order that she would have a fair sample.

"It's very funny, but not half bad," she said, after awhile. Then she was very thoughtful all the way home; but when they had arrived at the palace she said:

"You must come in and meet my father, the king, and my sisters; but be sure you don't fall in love with one of them!"

"If it were possible for me to fall in love it would never be with anyone but you!" declared Cyrus, laughing; "but, remember, I have the secret to guard!"

The king was vastly interested in the fly paper and Cyrus sent to the hotel for his samples to show the monarch. Everybody was crazy to meet the man who had saved the princess, and when all saw how her blue eyes were fastened on his handsome face they declared that was the end of the Bachelor Princess. When they heard the gossip that he had refused her, all were astounded, and Prince Omara cried:

"Faith and gadzooks! If he disappoints me I'll stick my sword into him, fly paper or no fly paper, for he must marry the princess and let us go home with her sisters!"

But when Cyrus had explained why he had refused her, in order to make her anxious to wed him, the prince smiled and said:

"Sure, you're the foxy rascal! I wonder nobody ever thought of that before!"

When the sticky paper arrived, in gold holders, all stared at it, and each one had to test it with his finger, from the king down, and each one got stuck! Then each tried to get the stuff off by rubbing it on his other fingers or something, which of course only made matters worse; but when the numerous flies in the palace began to scent it and settle down on its surface, all were immensely interested and began to bet on different sheets, laying large sums of money as to which would catch the most flies; so the rest of the day was passed right merrily.

The king's sheet won at last, having captured

eight hundred and fifty-six insects; but one of the princes whispered that the court chamberlain had caught and placed there over a hundred flies from the garden. But, as kings usually win, nobody attached the least importance to this scandalous assertion; and as Oleo ordered a ton of fly paper from Cyrus, the latter was satisfied with his day's work, you may be sure.

That evening he took a walk with Formaline, she having hinted that his suggestion of being a brother to her might suit, for awhile, at least, and they strolled among the low-hanging palms of the royal gardens while the royal band played all the new airs. Nobody, you may be sure, came near to disturb them, for everybody hoped that the princess would persuade Cyrus to marry her; but she said nothing about the matter; yet when they were returning homeward she said:

"Methinks I can't be sure that what you said about love-making is all true. Why do my sisters enjoy it so much?"

"Because they haven't scientific minds!" replied Cyrus.

"But," persisted the princess, "cannot there be such a thing as scientific kissing?"

"That's the kind I am peddling!" cried Cyrus, as he caught her and imprinted a warm kiss on her ruby lips, but he stopped as he reflected that he was betraying his feelings too plainly.

"If that's a truly scientific kiss," said the princess after a while, "then Science is not so soulless and cold an affair as they say it is. And I have something to learn about it, for it has made me feel like another girl!"



"It was merely a brotherly salute, believe me!" asserted Cyrus.

"I have never had a brother!" replied the princess, "and until now I have never regretted that fact; but now I wish we had been brought up together so that I'd know all these scientific things!"

She had made up her mind that he was to be her husband, although she would be compelled to admit that she had been mistaken all along; and that night she went to her father, King Oleo, and told him that he must find a way to make Cyrus marry her at once. The king was surprised, and said:

"Why, bless my soul! Has he refused to wed you?"

"Yes. He has a secret which he will be obliged to tell his wife, and he desires to keep it to himself, so he won't marry any one!"

"Goodness! Well, he will just have to marry you! Then you can have the secret from him and tell it to me!" cried the king. "I will make him a grand duke first thing in the morning, so that he will be of sufficient rank to wed a princess."

"But I am afraid that won't make him marry me!" said Formaline, sadly.

"I'll tell you what to do!" exclaimed King Oleo, after a moment of deepest thought. "You ask him yourself. He wouldn't be so impolite as to refuse a princess, you see."

"I'll do it!" cried the girl.

So, early in the morning, just after Cyrus received notice that he was now the Grand Duke Jackson, the princess sent for him, and without a moment's delay said:

"Dear brother, will you please marry me?"

"If you will confess that you really love me I will do it!" responded Grand Duke Jackson.

"Oh, I really and truly do! I loved you as soon as my eyes fell on you, but I was too proud to say so!" responded the blushing Formaline. "But that purely scientific kiss proved too much for me!"

"Then I am yours!" shouted Cyrus, taking her into his arms.

The next minute, for it seems that all the palace police had been secretly spying upon them, guessing what was about to occur, every bell in the city began to ring joyous peals, all the guns in the fort began to bang, people set off bombs and rockets and started to decorate their houses, for the city was filled with joy, as not one but five royal weddings were now assured.

Feasts were instantly arranged for in every household, the schools closed so that the children might be included in the great rejoicing, and the prisoners in Ghurra jail were promptly released and presented with new clothes. The bakers gave away pies and cakes, and the candy makers all manner of sweets to every passerby, until pretty nearly every boy and girl had indigestion.

The marriage was the most splendid affair ever seen, with six brides and grooms, and all their royal relations in the most gorgeous costumes, all so covered with gems that it was like looking at so many shining suns; but the Princess Formaline was the most beautiful of all!

After the wedding she promptly demanded of her husband that he at once impart to her the great secret of the fly paper's stickiness, and taking her to a remote part of the palace, where not even the secret police could ever hear him, by any chance, he whispered the recipe into her ear.



Of course, I dare not tell you what it was, for that would be revealing something told me in great confidence, but I am allowed to tell you this: If you happen to get that sticky stuff on your fingers or clothes, or if, peradventure, your pet pussy steps upon a sheet of fly paper, a little turpentine will remove the awful stuff. That's all I can tell you. But if you are careful that may never happen, and, of course, the cat must look out for herself.

And now Formaline is so happy all day long that she bitterly regrets that Grand Duke Jackson didn't come to Ghurra years sooner, for she now knows how much she missed by being a bachelor princess all those years when she was studying Science. But perhaps, if he'd gone there, he never would have had time to invent that wonderful fly paper, and without that this story would never have been told, and perhaps the princess would still be single. In fact, every one of them might still be single, for I am sure the princess couldn't have waited much longer, for they were all broke.

And, last of all, I will say that she's glad Cyrus told her about the turpentine, for the baby is constantly getting on the fly paper, no matter how carefully it is put away, and turpentine makes it an easy matter to clean off all the other things he fastens to himself when he tries to get loose.

WALT McDUGALL.